

Part I: Attachments

OMB Control Number: 1820-0664

Expiration Date: 10/31/2008

## **Attachment 1: Basic Information**

Name of Lead Agency: Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)

Name of Applicable Department for Lead Agency: Vocational Rehabilitation Services,  
Community Rehabilitation Programs

Address of Lead Agency: 2129 East South Blvd., Montgomery, AL 36117

Name and Title of Certifying Representative for Lead Agency: Steve Shivers,  
Commissioner/ADRS

Address for Certifying Representative: 2129 East South Blvd., Montgomery, AL 36117

Telephone for Certifying Representative: 334/281-8780

E-mail for Certifying Representative: shivers@rehab.state.al.us

Name and Title of Program Director: Joseph Helm, Assistant Commissioner/ADRS

Address for Program Director: *same as lead agency*

Telephone for Program Director: 334/613-2217

E-mail for Program Director: jhelm@rehab.state.al.us

Name and Title of Program Director: Alabama's Assistive Technology Program  
Statewide Technology Access and Response (STAR)

Pamela Blome, Ph.D., Executive Director

Address for Program Director: 2125 East South Blvd., Montgomery, AL 36117

Telephone for Program Director: 334/613-3481

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## **Attachment 2: Lead Agency and Implementing Entity**

**2.1 Identification and Description of the Lead Agency** - Identify and describe the Lead Agency referred to in section 4(c)(1)(A) of the AT Act.

### **2.1A Identification and Description of Lead Agency if an Implementing Entity is not Designated**

In 1993, the Governor designated Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) as the lead agency for the Statewide AT Program for the state of Alabama. This program is identified as Statewide Technology Access and Response System (STAR).

Unique in the nation, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is comprised of state and federal programs that provide a continuum of services from birth through life for Alabamians with disabilities. ADRS has four major programs: Early Intervention (AEIS) coordinates services statewide for infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays from birth to age 3, preparing them and their families for the transition to the State Department of Education's preschool program for 3-to-5-year-olds or other community programs. Children's Rehabilitation Services (CRS) provides services to children with special health-care needs from birth to age 21 and their families. CRS provides specialty medical services and clinics, expertise and adaptive technology to local school systems, assisting teachers and school nurses in the education of children with special health-care needs. CRS also administers the statewide Hemophilia Program, which serves Alabama's children and adults who have this life-threatening blood disorder. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) is the department's largest division, which provides rehabilitation, education and employment-related services to adolescents and adults with disabilities through long-standing partnerships with local school systems, colleges and universities, junior colleges, vocational technical schools and community rehabilitation programs. Independent Living / Homebound (SAIL) provide services to Alabamians who have the severest disabilities resulting from spinal cord or head injuries. Additionally, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services administers and provides services through programs including:

OASIS: The Older Alabamians System of Information and Services program, a federally funded program designed to assist persons 55 and older and visually impaired in living more independently in their homes. OASIS offers older Alabamians rehabilitation teaching services, orientation and mobility instruction, low-vision examinations and devices, individual peer support, support groups, mail reading services, and transportation assistance to low-vision clinics.

BEP: The Business Enterprise Program that provides qualified blind individuals with job training and employment opportunities through the management and operation of small businesses that provide independence through self-employment. Likewise, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services employs Rehabilitation Technology Specialists, an ADA Coordinator and has established numerous consumer/parent advisory councils.

Since 1994, STAR (Statewide Technology Access and Response) has provided Alabamians free access to information and referral services, Assistive Technology Reutilization Programs, Assistive Technology Demonstrations and short-term lending, a Title I Financial Loan Program (Southern Disability Foundation, Inc.) and various demonstration & educational programs and publications in accessible formats on extensive topics related to disability rights, laws/policies, and funding opportunities for assistive technology (AT). The mission of STAR has and will continue to be to increase the provision of, access to, and funding for assistive technology for Alabamians of all ages and all disabilities through a variety of comprehensive activities and services available statewide. Over the next three years, under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) will continue to serve as the lead agency and implementing entity responsible for the Statewide AT Program, and STAR will continue or begin programs to accomplish this mission.

The STAR staff currently consists of three (3) employees: an executive director and two (2) implementing activities coordinators however, there are future plans for two (2) additional employees: an office support assistant and a resource specialist to assist with public awareness, data collection and analysis and training coordination. Current STAR staff, collectively have 57 years experience in social services and work with at risk populations, including vocational/medical rehabilitation and assistive technology. Current educational backgrounds, degrees and certifications include: doctorate, masters and bachelors; behavioral science, education, rehabilitation, business and marketing. Assistive Technology Certifications include: Administration of Assistive Technology Services, Basic Principles in Assistive Technology, and Assistive Technology for School Psychologist. Likewise staff has both personal and professional involvement with individual with disabilities who use assistive technology.

STAR has an eleven-year history of established relationships with public and private entities in the state. Specifically, STAR staff members participate on boards, advisory councils, workgroups, committees, and commissions that address the needs of Alabamians with disabilities across a life span including such agencies as the: State Department of Education, Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind (AIDB), Supported Employment Programs and Independent Living Centers.

STAR works with school districts throughout the state on AT-related issues and participates in initiatives with various community-based organizations to increase

the availability of AT for the consumers they serve. STAR will continue these activities, provide training and technical assistance as appropriate; and participate in additional opportunities that address AT needs of individuals with disabilities. (See attachment 8).

STAR conducts many of its activities via subcontractors to help ensure coverage throughout the state. This helps certify that our programs will be accessible statewide yet convenient locally to individuals with disabilities through regional locations. For example, STAR's current Reutilization Programs, handle mainly durable medical equipment but assess all assistive technology donations. Current locations are as follows: (north) a subcontract with the United Cerebral Palsy for the Waste Not Technology Finds Program; (south) a subcontract with Goodwill Industries-Easter Seals and (central) the lead agency has a subcontract with the Opportunity Center. These programs have the unique responsibility for operating general AT equipment exchange activities, including collection, storage, refurbishment, and dissemination of assistive technology and durable medical equipment coherent with AT regulations and retain specific data as specified in contracts. Likewise, STAR's local office has historically been a "holding site" for donations. During year one, STAR's three reutilization programs, created and implemented uniform general policies and procedures. All programs now utilize a standard internal data collection system but in year two, programs will incorporate the data collection instrument determined by RSA.

Since 1998, STAR operated a small Equipment Loan Program and provided a few demonstrations from within our office location. Our Equipment Loan Program provides immediate short-term loans of assistive technology devices directly to consumers and service providers. Device demonstrations provided an opportunity to provide some assistive technology training. Over the next three years, STAR plans to work more closely with entities such as "Easter Seals" and "United Cerebral Palsy" and the "Opportunity Center" to assist with these programs. These entities have expertise in various specific areas of disability, have available staff, have community identification and have a subcontract with STAR to implement Reutilization Programs; all of which will help to ensure that STAR activities meet the needs of individuals regardless of their type of disability. (See attachment 5.3)

STAR will continue its important role of coordination and services provided with the Southern Disability Foundation, Inc. to operate both the Alternative Financing Program contracted as its community based organization and continue its work initiated under Title I funding activities (described in attachment 5 of this plan.)

In addition to the advisory council described in attachment 3 of this plan, STAR will ensure that its program is consumer responsive by seeking direct feedback from those who access the program, either through on-site interviews with participants or follow-up surveys. Additionally, STAR will utilize ongoing consumer focus groups to seek directional input and guidance of its programs and services.

**2.1B Identification and Description of the Lead Agency if an Implementing Entity is Designated**

**2.2 Identification and Description of the Implementing Entity** – Identify and describe the Implementing Entity referred to in section 4(c)(1)(B) of the AT Act, if such an Implementing Entity is designated by the Governor.

**Not applicable.**

**2.3 Show of Good Cause for Change in Lead Agency or Implementing Entity** – If the Governor has chosen to change the Lead Agency or, if applicable, Implementing Entity as allowed in section 4(c)(1)(C) of the AT Act, provide an explanation of good cause for this re-designation.

**Not applicable.**

## **Attachment 3: State Advisory Council**

**3.1 Membership of the Advisory Council** - Identify the members of the Advisory Council and each member's designation as an individual with disabilities who uses AT, a family member or guardian of such individual, or a representative of a State agency or other entity.

During the three years of this state plan, STAR's Statewide AT Advisory Council (SAC), will provide consumer-driven, consumer-responsive advice to STAR for planning and implementation of activities of Alabama's Statewide Technology Access and Response (STAR) program.

For confidentiality purposes, Alabama is not able to specify names of our advisory council membership. However, the SAC currently has a general membership of 18 members (with an additional 17 considered Ex-Officio members). Ex-Officio members will not be considered in the majority percentage count. ten (10) members or 52% of the SAC, are individuals with disabilities who use AT or families of individuals with disabilities who use AT. The remaining eight (8) members of the Council (not including the 17 Ex-Officio members) represent agencies including: the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Division of Blind/Deaf Services and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Center for Independent Living, State Department of Education, and the Alabama Office of Workforce Development. Although several agency representatives have disabilities, they will also not be double counted toward the majority membership of disability percentages.

The members of the SAC live in counties throughout the state to ensure representation from both rural and urban areas of Alabama. Similarly, the statewide membership (which includes committees) does what it can to reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the state, as it includes African-American, Hispanic, and Native American individuals. Members who use AT use a variety of devices, such as mobility devices, augmentative communication devices, and computer adaptations.

STAR chose to utilize consumer focus groups as a way to seek directional input and advice regarding its programs and services on a more local level. During the first year of this State Plan, three "Assistive Technology Consumer Committees" (ATCC) were developed. In collaboration with STAR's Assistive Technology Coordinator, ATCC met once in the north, central and southern areas of the state. Results of ATCC meetings are presented to SAC for statewide significance through the Assistive Technology Coordinator. To date, consumers have identified and discussed local obstacles regarding the acquisition of assistive technology.

**3.2 Structure and Operation of the Advisory Council** – Describe the structure and operations of the Advisory Council.

Members of the SAC become part of the council in two ways: agency representatives are appointed by their respective agencies, while consumer representatives are volunteers solicited through networks of non-profit disability organizations, councils and consumer groups throughout the state. Members are encouraged to serve a three-year term to coincide with the length of Alabama's State Plan for Assistive Technology.

A chairperson, elected by the membership will lead the SAC with a similarly elected vice-chair to serve in the absence of the chairperson. Standard committees will guide and provide input to STAR's implementing activities (e.g. financing alternatives, assistive technology reutilization, assistive technology demonstration and assistive technology short-term lending programs.) However, the SAC itself may determine the need for additional subcommittees on a case-by-case basis and may elect members of any proposed subcommittees. At the chairperson's discretion, council decisions will be made either through consensus or by membership vote. Election of Officers will take place at the first quarterly meeting of the new fiscal year. Elected terms are one year but may be renewed. An SAC manual containing Policies & Procedures, an application, assurances checklist, etc has become a new practice of the SAC membership as of June 2005. Incorporating local ATCCs further ensures that consumer involvement complies with sections 4(c)(2)(B)(i)(II)-(V) of the AT Act.

The SAC will meet in-person four times (quarterly) per year and STAR will provide conference call access to those members unable to attend. STAR will also participate in at least four (quarterly), regionally located committee specific, (e.g. financing alternatives, assistive technology reutilization, assistive technology demonstration and assistive technology short-term lending programs) sessions as previously stated. STAR Program staff will arrange meetings, develop information packets for advisory members, and/or ensure site and material accessibility. The chairperson of the SAC and the STAR executive director will jointly devise the agenda for SAC meetings held in Montgomery and ensure that council members are informed about state AT issues. (STAR Program Coordinators will jointly devise the Local/Regional Advisory Committee meeting agendas with STAR's regional subcontract entity representative.) Meetings may include a special presentation or guest speaker, selected by membership's input. STAR staff will be responsible for providing membership with activity implementation update reports, including data collection assurances and related activities. The chairperson's responsibilities will include an open forum discussion to generate memberships' interest, understanding, and input into STAR's program activities. Meeting minutes will be maintained in the STAR office and disseminated in a timely manner to members of the SAC.



## **Attachment 4: Measurable Goals**

Alabama will establish a baseline for goals 4.1 through 4.7 during year two, and will submit after year two an amendment identifying the long term goal and short-term goals set to improve upon this baseline during year three and subsequent years of the State Plan. This baseline will be established by using a data collection instrument and procedures to be determined by RSA after the State plan process has been completed.

### **4.1 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Education**

Long-term Goal: Percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for educational purposes as a result of the assistance they received will increase yearly.

#### **Objectives for Device Loan and Demonstration Programs**

Short-term goal for Year 3: Increase in percentage over year 2 (to be established later) of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for educational purposes as a result of the assistance they received.

Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for educational purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A approved data collection tool not establish

### **4.2 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Employment**

Long-term Goal: Percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for employment purposes as a result of the assistance they received will increase yearly.

#### **Objectives for Device Loan and Demonstration Programs**

Short-term goal for Year 3: Increase in percentage over year 2 (to be established later) of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for employment purposes as a result of the assistance they received.

Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State

financing activities or reutilization programs for employment purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A approved data collection tool not establish

#### **4.3 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Community Living**

Long-term Goal: Percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for community living as a result of the assistance they received will increase yearly.

##### **Objectives for Device Loan and Demonstration Programs**

Short-term goal for Year 3: Increase in percentage over year 2 (to be established later) of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for community living as a result of the assistance they received.

Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for community living purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A approved data collection tool not establish

#### **4.4 Goal for Improving Access to IT and Telecommunications**

Long-term Goal: Percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service that meets an IT/telecommunications need as a result of the assistance they received will increase yearly.

##### **Objectives for Device Loan and Demonstration Programs**

Short-term goal for Year 3: Increase in percentage over year 2 (to be established later) of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service that meets an IT/telecommunications need as a result of the assistance they received.

Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for information technology & telecommunications purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A approved data collection tool not establish

#### **4.5 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Education**

Long-term Goal: Percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for educational purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service will increase yearly.

##### **Objectives for State Financing Activities and Reutilization Programs**

Short-term goal for Year 3: Increase in percentage over year 2 (to be established later) of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for educational purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for educational purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A approved data collection tool not establish

#### **4.6 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Employment**

Long-term Goal: Percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for employment purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service will increase yearly.

##### **Objectives for State Financing Activities and Reutilization Programs**

Short-term goal for Year 3: Increase in percentage over year 2 (to be established later) of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for employment purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for employment purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A approved data collection tool not establish

#### 4.7 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Community Living

Long-term Goal: Percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices and services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for community living purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service will increase yearly.

##### Objectives for State Financing Activities and Reutilization Programs

Short-term goal for Year 3: Increase in percentage over year 2 (to be established later) of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for community living purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for community living purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.

Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A approved data collection tool not establish

**4.8 Additional Measurable Goals** -- If applicable, describe any measurable goals that the State has set in addition to the goals established in items 4.1 through 4.7 for addressing the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities in the State related to education, employment, community living, and telecommunications and information technology.

**Not applicable**

#### Summary of Annual Objective Measures and To Be Determined (TBD) Increases

	Device Loan Programs		
	<i>Yr 1</i>	<i>Yr 2</i>	<i>Yr 3</i>
Education	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
Employment	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
Community Living	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
IT/Telecommunication	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
	Device Demonstration Programs		
	<i>Yr 1</i>	<i>Yr 2</i>	<i>Yr 3</i>
Education	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
Employment	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
Community Living	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
IT/Telecommunication	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%

	Recycling Programs		
	<i>Yr 1</i>	<i>Yr 2</i>	<i>Yr 3</i>
Education	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
Employment	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
Community Living	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
IT/Telecommunication	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%

	Financing Programs		
	<i>Yr 1</i>	<i>Yr 2</i>	<i>Yr 3</i>
Education	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
Employment	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
Community Living	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
IT/Telecommunication	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%

## Attachment 5: State-level Activities

**5.1 State Financing Activities** – Describe how the State will implement State financing activities as described in section 4(e)(2)(A) of the AT Act.

Alabama will implement at least one identifiable state financing activity with at least some support from federal AT Act dollars.

Ability Loans will be an alternative financing program for individuals with disabilities and their families to borrow money at low-interest or extended-terms for the purchase of assistive technology, adaptive equipment and related services. Alternative financing needs may include but will not be limited to a means of paying for devices not covered by public programs, as means of providing a loan sooner than other public programs, and/or a means of having another funding source available.

The alternative financing program will be administered by Southern Disability Foundation, Inc. (SDF); founded in collaboration with STAR to create Alabama's *Ability Loan Program*. The Ability Loan Fund was originally capitalized with Title I funds (from the AT Act of 1998). Federal AT Act dollars will be used at least in part to administer the program, while other non-Federal funding will be used for the direct purchase or financing of AT.

Any Alabama resident who has a disability; and/or the individual's family member, guardian, caregiver, or personal representative, and whose independence or quality of life would be improved by the acquisition of assistive technology will be eligible to apply for a loan regardless of age, race or disability. Items covered by the program include but are not limited to: Telecommunication devices for the deaf, hard-of-hearing and speech-impaired (TTY), Closed-circuit television (CCTV), Computer adaptive access or output, Braille machine, Environmental control unit (ECU), Augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) device, Wheelchair, Adaptive driving controls, Power lift, Ramp, Roll-in shower, and/or any other device or related service as defined under the assistive technology act.

Applications may be submitted at any time by mail and will be available from STAR, Alabama's Centers for Independent Living and Alabama's network of Community Rehabilitation Programs. Procedures for applying will include submitting and completing a loan application form to include a written quote and description of the assistive technology device or service the individual desires to purchase. *Ability Loans* will be available comprehensively statewide to all qualifying borrowers. A full range of AT will be eligible under the program and there will not be any disability restrictions.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services in collaboration with STAR and the SDF Board received Federal funding for the implementation of an Alternative Financing Program (AFP). During the first year of this plan, significant

effort was devoted to developing appropriate processes. (e.g. developing policies & procedures, finalizing legal agreements, marketing strategies, etc). STAR employed an Alternative Financing Coordinator who assists SDF (the community based organization) to facilitate and implement the procedural policies for loan processing and data collection. The Alternative Financing Coordinator serves as SDF's primary loan advocate / reviewer and the link between the consumer loan applicant and the SDF approval committee. Applicants are provided guidance and assistance through the STAR Alternative Financing Coordinator throughout the application process including applicable and available options to obtaining a loan (e.g. reutilization programs, ADRS services, educational services and other non-profit service eligibility).

The AFP allows applicants to borrow money at low interest or extended terms for the purchase of assistive technology, adaptive equipment and related services. Limits and restrictions for the program vary. Current loan amounts range from \$3,000 to \$35,000 as per agreement with the financial institution (Regions Bank). Loans can be used towards assistive devices such as Wheelchairs, Scooters, Braille Equipment, Voice Simulation Systems, Scanners, Assistive Listening Devices, Telecommunications devices for the deaf, Augmentative Communication Systems, Environmental Control Units, Computers & Adaptive peripherals, Building Modifications for accessibility, Vehicle Modifications, etc. (Other A.T. must be approved by coordinator and/or board member.)

Application materials are currently available through the STAR office by contacting the AFP Coordinator at 1.800.STAR.656 or 334.613.3480. In the near future loan application materials may be accessed through the web at [www.rehab.state.al.us/star](http://www.rehab.state.al.us/star) Program materials will also be available at Regions Bank locations statewide and through the state Independent Living Centers (ILC) and Community Rehabilitation Programs. Completed applications are submitted to the AFP Coordinator through a post office address (e.g. P.O. Box 20752, Montgomery, AL 36120). The coordinator conducts a preliminary review of materials submitted. Completed packets are forwarded to the Loan Approval Committee of the Southern Disability Foundation, Inc. Approved applicants receive further instructions regarding the loan process. Additionally, unapproved applicants are assessed for appropriate resources.

**5.2 Device Reutilization Program** – Describe how the State will implement a device reutilization program as described in section 4(e)(2)(B) of the Act.

*Statewide Assistive Technology Re-utilization Programs* - During the first year of this state plan, Alabama implemented three equipment reutilization programs through subcontracts with Goodwill Easter Seals of the Gulf Coast, Opportunity Center Easter Seals and United Cerebral Palsy of Huntsville and Tennessee Valley, Inc. The ability to contract with entities located in the northern, eastern and

southern parts of the state; helps STAR to ensure that Device Reutilization Programs are accessible statewide.

These programs increase options for acquiring no-cost/low-cost AT for individuals with disabilities comprehensively to meet the needs of individuals with all types of disabilities of all ages. A full range of AT will be eligible under the program and there will not be any disability restrictions. Only the range of devices donated/listed and the resources needed to refurbish those devices restricts these programs. Program locations are uniquely designed under general policies and procedures:

*Donations* are obtained by various means (family members/advocates of individuals with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, case managers for individuals with disabilities, schools, DME Vendors, etc). Inquiries/acceptance arrangements can be made via toll free number, locally numbers, emails and/or in person and donations are tax deductible.

*Acquisition* of donation(s) may occur through donor drop-off, staff delivery, and/or donor-to-user. Each donation will be assessed on a case-by-case bases at the closest local level for both acceptance and delivery means. All programs make every effort to assure donation variety as much as possible however some donation items will be strictly donor-to-user.

*Refurbishing* policies include action assessments for repairs, disassembling for parts, cleaning, or disposal of then placed accordingly. Items are inventoried and labeled with return information to ensure redistributed device/item is not re-abandoned.

*Marketing* awareness is multi-facet (word of mouth, brochures, collaborative newsletters, listserve, public media, internet, etc).

*Re-issuing* Monthly inventory lists are obtained and emailed statewide via in-house (ADRS) and to listserv members. (Listserv membership is free for the asking); with the exception of larger items (hospital beds, etc) or out-of-the-ordinary (diapers, adaptive clothing, etc) being emailed upon notification of availability.

- Email recipients are encouraged to review the list and utilize it in as much as possible either for filling a need they know of and/or passing it on to others who might benefit. Likewise they will be instructed as to contact information and are reminded that (1) items are provided free-of-charge, for as long as needed, all that we asked, is that when it is no longer needed it be returned so it can then be utilized again by someone else in need (2) that donations are accepted & tax deductible (3) contents on lists contain item name, category, an estimated cost if



they would have had to buy it new and the condition it is considered to be in.

- Inquires are received on a daily basis through I & R calls which are routed by previously mentioned means of locating a match. When matches are not available, additional alternatives will be suggested which may include but will not be limited to alternative financing options and/or placed on a waiting list (as inventory constantly changes).

*Acquisition* Procedures of matched AT include items accompanied by a receipt/release form which contains specific data for both statistical and strategic program planning purposes to ensure compliance measures. Transportation of available matched equipment is achieved on a case-by-case basis but is ultimately the end-users responsibility.

Reutilization programs will support measurable goals 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 related to acquisition of assistive technology for education, employment and community living by making available “pre-owned” devices at no cost with the exception of low-cost purchasing power when applicable on a case by case bases.

STAR employs an Assistive Technology Center Coordinator who facilitates the use of program procedural policies manuals by all subcontract entities. This staff member administers oversight for compliance assurances including the design of the ATCC meetings and data collection including an analysis of the individuals with disabilities that have benefited from the reutilization program(s) who would not have otherwise obtained AT. The Assistive Technology Center Coordinator serves as STAR’s main link between the general public, program locations and the state’s STAR Advisory Council (SAC).

During year one, STAR’s three reutilization programs, created and implemented uniform general policies and procedures. All programs now utilize a standard internal data collection system but in year two, programs will incorporate the data collection instrument determined by RSA.

**5.3 Device Loan Program** – Describe how the State will implement a device loan program as described in section 4(e)(2)(C) of the Act.

Choosing the right device to meet an individual's needs requires technical knowledge and in-depth understanding of the individual's functional capabilities. Not only is the selection of a device made difficult by the complexity of the equipment and the demands of the individual's impairment, but assistive technology devices can be very expensive. Making such purchases is not only a major financial commitment; but buying and then not using a device can be a devastating experience for all concerned.

Over the next three years, STAR will provide short-term device loans for Alabamians with disabilities who wish to experiment with various devices by subcontracting with community based organizations (e.g. UCP, Easter Seals – Goodwill Industries, Opportunity Center, etc). The device lending programs will reduce the time required for acquisition of needed devices and services; and will permit individuals to acquire hands-on experience with equipment before making a purchase. For example, parents may borrow a variety of assistive technology devices to try out with a child before making a purchase. Individuals, who are temporarily disabled, or those who are waiting for delivery or repair of a device, may also have access to the equipment. Professionals may borrow equipment for purposes of evaluations and assessments.

The device loan program will encourage interdisciplinary AT assessments from experienced personnel, will be available statewide and be comprehensive. The goal of this activity will be to “try-before-you-buy” to increase accessibility to appropriate adaptive devices. Examples of available equipment included: AlphaTalker, Dynamyte, Link, Hawk, Intellikeys for Macintosh, Plug 'n' Power, Alpha Smart, Yellow Texture Switch, Big Red Switch, Plate Switch, Mounting Switch, various Switch-activated toys, various Touch/sound-activated toys, CCTV (Closed-circuit television for persons with visual impairments), TechScan, Enlarged keyboard, various activities of daily living (ADL) aids for persons with physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments (e.g. dressing, eating, homemaking, recreation, communication, grooming, and sensory aids.)

The standard equipment loan period will be two weeks; however, loans may be extended in two-week increments on a case-by-case basis. Policies & procedures will include the completion of an Equipment Loan Agreement (ELA).

STAR combined its subcontracts for Device Loan Programs with its Device Demonstration Programs (see section 5.4), as a means of expanding & improving the infrastructure for daily implementation. This decision allows STAR to ensure statewide coverage, activity increase and improved AT awareness.

During year one of this plan, STAR expanded and improved our Device Loan Program. STAR expanded by entering into several unique agreements (Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind, Mobile Public Schools, Easter Seals Central Alabama Rehabilitation, Tanner High School, ADRS: Older Alabamians System of Information and Services –OASIS, United Cerebral Palsy of Huntsville & Tennessee Valley, and ADRS: Children’s Rehabilitation Services – CRS). These agreements included the purchase of assistive technology for demonstration and short-term loans; and utilizing a standard internal data system, which includes acquisition outcomes. These agreements included the purchase of assistive technology for demonstration and short-term loans with data collection which includes acquisition outcomes. These agreements have assisted STAR with more comprehensive coverage.

STAR will employ an Assistive Technology Centers Coordinator who will facilitate the use of program procedural policies manuals by all contract entities. This staff member will administer oversight for compliance assurances including the design of regional consumer-responsive advisory committees and data collection which will include an analysis of the individuals with disabilities that have benefited from the Device Loan program(s) who would not have otherwise obtained appropriate AT. The Assistive Technology Centers Coordinator will maintain collective data assurances, review and assess future program needs (example: an interactive website to help STAR ensure statewide coverage, increase accessibility and improve awareness). The Assistive Technology Centers Coordinator will serve as the programs main link between bottom-up regional advisory committees, the STAR Advisory Council (SAC) and implementing activities.

**5.4 Device Demonstration Program** – Describe how the State will implement a device demonstration program as described in section 4(e)(2)(D) of the Act.

Over the next three years, STAR will develop device demonstration programs with three community based organizations via subcontracts. When and where appropriate, STAR will utilize the same implementing entities that house the *Reutilization Programs* (5.2) and *Device Loan Programs* (5.3). Each entity will maintain a wide variety of cross-disability AT available for demonstration purposes, maintain a reasonable amount of AT for short-term lending and have significant staff expertise in AT. Each program center will be in an accessible facility, and either have a toll free number or will utilize referrals through STAR's 800 number. Each location will be expected to provide assistive technology device demonstrations/loans to individuals with disabilities, their families and caregivers, professionals, and others to increase awareness, support informed decision-making regarding device selection, and assist in effective device usage. Device demonstrations will include individual and group exploration of a range of devices to increase awareness, individual consultations designed to support device trials and aid in appropriate device selection, and individual and group training on a particular device to support appropriate usage.

STAR combined its subcontracts for Device Demonstration Programs with Device Loan Programs (see section 5.3), as a means of expanding & improving the infrastructure for daily implementation. This decision allows STAR to ensure statewide coverage, activity increase and improved AT awareness.

During the year one of this plan, STAR expanded and improved our Device Demonstration Program. STAR expanded by entering into several unique agreements (Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind, Mobile Public Schools, Easter Seals Central Alabama Rehabilitation, Tanner High School, ADRS: Older Alabamians System of Information and Services –OASIS, United Cerebral Palsy of Huntsville & Tennessee Valley, and ADRS: Children's Rehabilitation Services – CRS). These agreements included the purchase of assistive technology for

demonstration and short-term loans; and utilizing a standard internal data system, which includes acquisition outcomes. These agreements included the purchase of assistive technology for demonstration and short-term loans with data collection which includes acquisition outcomes. These agreements have assisted STAR with more comprehensive coverage.

The program centers support goals 4.1 through 4.4 improving access in education, employment, community living and information technology and telecommunications by providing hands-on access to devices with appropriate technical support available to assist in device exploration and decision making.

STAR will employ an Assistive Technology Centers Coordinator who will facilitate the use of program procedural policies manuals by all contract entities. This staff member will administer oversight for compliance assurances including the design of regional consumer-responsive advisory committees and data collection which will include an analysis of the individuals with disabilities that have benefited from the device demonstration program(s) who would not have otherwise obtained services leading to the acquisition of appropriate assistive technology. The Assistive Technology Centers Coordinator will also review and assess future program needs, maintain collective data assurances and serve as the programs main link between bottom-up regional advisory committees, the STAR Advisory Council (SAC) and implementing activities.

## **Attachment 6: Comparable Support**

**6.1 Source and Amount of Support** – Identify the State-level activity for which there is comparable support, the source of this support, the amount of the support, and the project year for which this support is being provided.

**Not applicable – no claim of comparability**

**6.2 Comparability** -- Demonstrate that this support is comparable in terms of funding and that the activities are comparable in terms of scope.

**Not applicable – no claim of comparability**

**6.3 Coordination and Collaboration** – Describe how the State will coordinate activities and collaborate with the appropriate entity, if the comparable funds are provided to, or the activities are conducted by, an entity other than the Lead Agency or Implementing Entity.

**Not applicable – no claim of comparability**

## **Attachment 7: State Flexibility**

**7.1 Activity** – Identify each State-level activity the State is choosing not to carry out.

**Not applicable**

**7.2 Maintenance of Statewideness and Comprehensiveness** – Demonstrate that the Statewide AT Program will continue to be comprehensive without conducting this activity.

**Not applicable**

**7.3 Achievement of Measurable Goals** - Demonstrate that the State can reach its measurable education goals, employment goals, telecommunications and information technology goals, and community living goals without conducting such activities.

**Not applicable**

**7.4 Coordination and Collaboration** – Describe how the Lead Agency or Implementing Entity will coordinate activities and collaborate with entities in the State that do conduct this activity, if the State chooses not to conduct this activity because another entity already conducts it.

**Not applicable**

*Alabama is not utilizing the state flexibility clause of the AT Act.*

## **Attachment 8: State Leadership Activities**

**8.1 Training and Technical Assistance Activities** – Describe how the State will provide training and technical assistance to enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals from local settings statewide, including representatives of State and local educational agencies, other State and local agencies, early intervention programs, adult service programs, hospitals and other health care facilities, institutions of higher education and businesses as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(i) of the AT Act.

### **Training**

Over the next three years, STAR will engage in a number of training activities. Since its existence STAR has developed a number of training modules, these modules continue to be of value to various audiences and can be custom-designed for specific groups and will be delivered upon request. These include:

- Training for education professionals Enhancing Technology Access and Attitudes is a custom-designed sensitivity/hands-on AT device and service program for special education teachers, classroom teachers, parent groups and other groups that need basic awareness and understanding of AT and the role it plays in the improvement, functioning and independence of students with disabilities. Program content will range from providing a basic understanding of AT, to developing a respect for the AT user, to training on the use of specific devices. The training has been developed to address the use of AT representing a broad array of disabilities and devices. This training is provided for free upon requests and may be conducted at parent group meetings, schools, individual classrooms and at local, regional, or statewide conferences.
- Training for employment professionals to include employers In collaboration with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services cadre of Rehabilitation Engineers, STAR will assist with the development of training modules and participate in training opportunities that focus on the use and value of AT in workplace environments. During the first year of this plan, STAR hired a Training Coordinator, who has been appointed to the State Career Technical Education Advisory Council. Training will target new rehabilitation counselors, new placement personnel, employers and their HRD staff and employment specialists of the state's one-stop career center system.
- Training for aged consumers and professionals working with older adults Over the next three years STAR staff will partner with Alabama's Older Blind Program (OASIS) to provide Small Changes/Big Differences, a hands-on demonstration/presentation of low-cost low-tech AT devices and independent living aids designed to address barriers associated with aging

and vision loss or blindness. This training will target OASIS peer support groups and senior centers.

- Training for parents and Early Intervention professionals Over the next three years STAR staff will provide Tech Step training a hands-on demonstration/presentation of low-tech AT device toys and switches designed to address barriers associated with early childhood development and intervention. This training will target parent groups, Early Intervention Services staff, and other professionals working with young children.

### **Technical Assistance**

STAR will provide direct and coordinated technical assistance to individuals, groups, agencies, and organizations upon request. STAR'S technical assistance activities will focus on specific problem solving to ensure the appropriate access to and acquisition of AT, the appropriate use and application of assistive technology devices, assistive technology services; and AT specific training to meet the individualized needs of individuals with disabilities. While it is difficult to determine the nature and volume of technical assistance requests the primary focus will be directed toward problem solving and coordination with AT vendors and other specialized AT resources to produce positive AT solutions.

### **Transition**

The AT Act requires that STAR specifically focus on training and technical assistance around transition. This includes transition for students with disabilities who are leaving high school for employment or post-secondary education and transition for those entering or maintaining community living. During the first year, STAR participated in the State Transition Conference and began developing its electronic newsletter. During the second year of this state plan, STAR will update and create downloadable and printable resources to be housed on an interactive website and publicized through an electronic newsletter:

- Resources aimed at providing special educators, vocational rehabilitation counselors, parents, and students involved in transitioning from school to employment, post-secondary or community living with the skills and knowledge they need to successfully include AT in transitioning to these new environments.
- Resources aimed at supported living environments, family members, and consumers with significant disabilities to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to successfully include AT in all transition planning.

STAR will also identify and participate in opportunities to provide such training in a statewide manner. (e.g. State Transitions Conference, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Conference, etc).



**8.2 Public Awareness Activities** – Describe how the State will provide information to targeted individuals and entities relating to the availability, benefits, appropriateness, and costs of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(ii) of the AT Act.

Since 1994, The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' Assistive Technology Program's - STAR staff has provided information and referral services (I & R) whereas information regarding assistive technology products, services, resources, suppliers, and funding have been request via a statewide toll free number. STAR has and will continue to assist all inquires regardless of ages, disability, type of AT, etc as indicated within the legislative regulations.

**Information and Referral.** During the next three years, STAR will continue to provide information and referral through its 1-800 line to ensure statewide availability. The 1-800 line will be maintained by office support staff who will direct inquiries to appropriate staff and or entity depending on the nature of the requests whether it be related to funding, training, donations, demonstrations, acquisition, etc.

**Newsletters.** Historically, STAR developed and disseminated newsletters on a monthly and quarterly basis. However, we found this to be very expensive and not the best use of program funds. STAR proposes over the next three years is a collaboration for space within other statewide newsletters and improved use of electronic communication. Regular bylines will include AT information, current events related to STAR activities (see attachment 5), and web site resources on AT.

**Website.** STAR's website has always been linked to its lead agency's website. However, we have found that the provided information needs to be improved and expanded. Over the next three years, STAR will work on improving its web links to include in-depth information on the four State Level Activities (see attachment 5), as well as current events related to STAR activities and AT website resources on AT, available AT materials, and legislative updates regarding AT. Additionally, during the next three years STAR plans to have available, an interactive website which will provide an opportunity for individuals to contact reutilization programs directly including a listserv type "classifieds" for purposes of feedback, information and referral, listing for sale items and an on-line application for the state alternative financing program.

**8.3 Coordination and Collaboration** – Describe how the State will coordinate activities among public and private entities that are responsible for policies, procedures, or funding for the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services to individuals with disabilities, service providers, and others to improve access to assistive technology devices and assistive technology services as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(iii) of the AT Act.

Coordination and collaboration with public and private entities regarding policies, procedures and funding is often based on emerging, new, or changing policies and procedures, it is difficult to anticipate all of the coordination and collaboration activities that STAR will undertake over the next three years. However, it is the intent of STAR staff to actively participate with various agencies through a reciprocal arrangement where information and approaches can be shared. This arrangement will allow for the respective input and sharing of information regarding AT policy, procedure and funding issues of mutual interest and concern from the point of view of both STAR and existing organizations and workgroups serving and or advocating for individuals with disabilities. Reciprocal memberships currently exist between STAR and the ADRS State Rehabilitation Council and Local VR Consumer Advisory Councils, the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy and Protection program and the statewide Special Education Coordinator.

An example of continuing initiatives of coordination and collaboration between STAR and the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy and Protection program includes the proposal of new or changes to current AT policies regarding Medicaid and Medicare expansion of augmentative communication services and power wheelchair coverage

The following examples represent workgroups where reciprocal memberships will enable STAR to share information and request and receive input on AT policy, procedure, and funding issues.

Joint membership between STAR staff and Advisory Council members will enhance the sharing of information between STAR and the groups listed below;

ADRS State Rehabilitation Council  
Local VR Consumer Advisory Councils  
State Independent Living Council  
Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities  
Alabama Disabilities Action Coalition  
Civitan Consumer Advisory Council  
Alabama Disabilities Advocacy and Protection  
Special Education/Transition  
ADRS Supported Work  
Disabled Student Coordinators  
Older Alabamians System of Information and Services  
Blind Advisory Committee  
Deaf Advisory Committee  
Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf  
E.H. Gentry Technical Facility-Technology Committee  
Community Rehabilitation Programs  
Consumer Advocacy Groups  
Children's Rehabilitation Services  
Alabama's Early Intervention System

Alabama Head Injury Foundation  
UCP of Greater Birmingham  
Lakeshore Rehabilitation Center  
Lakeshore Rehabilitation Foundation  
Southern Disability Foundation  
Independent Living Centers (Montgomery/Birmingham)  
State of Alabama Independent Living

STAR staff and STAR Advisory Council members have identified AT issues surrounding access to and acquisition of assistive technology involving price gouging, funding, insurance coverage (e.g. classifications – experimental vs. medical necessity) and lemon law issues covering AT devices. Over the next three years, STAR will participate on statewide task forces as follows bringing such issues to the table regarding AT policy, procedures and funding:

STAR staff will keep Advisory Council members updated as to each of the above groups' meeting agendas, current AT policy and procedures for acquisition of AT; as well as funding options and give regular updates as to progress achieved on policy, procedures and funding issues.

**Attachment 9: Involvement of Public and Private Entities**

**9.1 Nature and Extent of Resources** – Describe the nature and extent of resources that will be committed by public and private collaborators to assist in accomplishing identified goals.

**Not applicable**

**9.2 Mechanisms to Ensure Coordination** - Describe the mechanisms established to ensure coordination of activities and collaboration between the implementing entity, if any, and the State.

**Not applicable**

**9.3 Involvement of State Advisory Council** - Describe the nature and extent of the involvement of the State Advisory Council in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the activities carried out through the grant, including setting the measurable goals required in section 4(d)(3).

As indicated under attachment 3, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services in collaboration with its Assistive Technology Program, STAR, will maintain a consumer controlled, entity specific STAR Advisory Council (SAC) designed with committee specific interest areas. An SAC application packet and manual has been developed and will be maintained through the joint assistance of a SAC Membership Committee and STAR Administration.

The STAR Advisory Council evaluates all programs and services each year and produces an annual report that documents fiscal year deliverables. The annual report is used to identify and plan for program improvement in upcoming years. The annual report is also provided to the legislature and Governor's office per state statute requirements. For purposes of State Plan submission, the SAC discussed content issues during the June meeting prior to submission.

Over the next three years, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the activities including the setting of measurable goals will be conducted jointly with the input of SAC (including regional membership) and STAR staff through a minimum of quarterly meetings.

## **Attachment 10: State Support**

**10.1 State Support for State-level Activities** – If applicable, describe how the State will support with State funds any State-level activities described in section 4(e)(2).

**Not applicable**

**10.2 State Support for State Leadership Activities** - If applicable, describe how the State will support with State funds any State Leadership activities described in section 4(e)(3), if applicable.

**Not applicable**

## Attachment 11: Allocation and Utilization of Funds

**11.1 Tracking Expenditures** – Describe planned procedures for tracking expenditures for activities described in sections 4(e)(2) and (3).

All funds received and expenditures made regarding Alabama's Assistive Technology Program (STAR) are monitored and managed on a monthly basis by the lead agency's Assistant Commissioner and the STAR Executive Director in cooperation with both the lead agency's accounting department and the accounting department of Easter Seals Central Alabama the primary contractor for STAR staff. The accounting department of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services utilizes an electronic fiscal management system, the Local Government Fiscal System (LGFS) to budget, encumber and track all program income and expenditures. The LGFS system utilizes a program coding process, line item budgeting and object code tracking of all expenditures. Detail budget and expenditure reporting can be retrieved at any time to assure and monitor STAR's compliance with the percentages and budgeted amounts per this State Plan. Additionally, the lead agency is subject to an external audit and review by the Examiners of Public Accounts and the contractor is required to obtain an annual audit performed by a qualified auditing firm.

**11.2 Proposed Budget Allocations** – Attach a budget containing proposed allocations for activities described in sections 4(e)(2) and (3).

The following are proposed budget allocations for State Leadership and State Level Activities for Year 1 of the project. These numbers will serve as an estimate only for Year 2 and Year 3 of this State Plan.

<b><u>Proposed Allocation</u></b>	<b><u>Distribution</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
State Level	60%	\$197,255
State Leadership	40%	\$131,504
Leadership Activities 95% of 40%	\$124,929	
Transition 5% of 40%	\$6,575	
Administrative Costs		\$32,876
<b>TOTAL Budget</b>		<b>\$361,635</b>
<b>Total Award</b>		<b>\$361,635</b>

Within the above budget, STAR proposes to apportion funds for specific activities in the following manner. However, these numbers reflect budgeted estimates, and will serve as a basis for Year 2 and Year 3 of this State Plan.

<b>State Level Activities</b>	<b>Proposed Allocation</b>
State Financing Activities	\$52,361
Device Reutilization Program	\$104,894
Device Loan Program	\$20,000
Device Demonstration Program	\$20,000
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$197,255</b>
 <b>State Leadership Activities</b>	 <b>Proposed Allocation</b>
Training, Technical Assistance	\$53,588
Public Awareness	\$35,670
Coordination and Collaboration	\$35,671
Transition	\$6,575
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$131,504</b>
 <b>Sub-Total</b>	 <b>\$328,759</b>
<b>Administrative Costs 10%</b>	<b>\$32,876</b>
<b>Total Award</b>	<b><u>\$361,635</u></b>